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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FM ZEBARI AND CHARGE DISCUSS ELECTORAL DISTRICTS,
SHARING RESOURCES, AND KIRKUK

Classified By: Charge D' Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. Foreign Minister Zebari told Charge Satterfield on July 11 that Kurdish leaders favor a single national electoral district, but he does not think this position is unmovable. Charge emphasized that the USG favors an outcome in which natural resources belong to the national government, as outlined in the TAL. For the USG to spend money on Kirkuk, Charge stressed that the Kirkuk Provincial Council must be seated first. Coupled with Article 58 discussions within the constitutional debate, Charge outlined three immediate steps: agreement to a seat for an Arab chosen by Arabs, progress on the Iraq Property Claims Commission, and movement on the Kirkuk Foundation. Zebari urged Charge to meet with Barzani and Talabani on the Kirkuk issue and offered to arrange the meeting. Charge told Zebari that we would continue to work with the Sunnis and encourage the insurgency to talk to Iraq and the Coalition about laying down their arms. Following the recent attacks on the diplomatic envoys, Zebari informed Charge that he and Interior Minister Jabr had offered security assistance to foreign missions. End Summary.

Districts, Resources, and Kirkuk

2. (C) Foreign Minister Zebari told Charge Satterfield on July 11 that he belongs to a small group whose aim is to encourage progress on the constitution. Drawn from "the two parliamentary groups", this small group includes Vice President Mahdi, Deputy Prime Minister Shaways, Planning Minister Barham Saleh, Deputy Head of the Constitutional Committee Fuad Maasum, and TNA Security and Defense Chairman Maliki. Zebari said that the group's goal is to facilitate and accelerate discussions on federalism, the status of Kirkuk, the role of religion, the structure of the state, allocation of natural resources, and other contentious issues. He admitted that no Sunnis belong to this group.

3. (C) Charge asked whether the group had taken any critical positions, pointing out that a "fait accompli" without Sunni participation would not be positive. After attending only one group meeting since his return from a long trip abroad, Zebari was unsure. However, he discussed electoral districts, resource sharing, and Kirkuk from a Kurdish perspective.

- ELECTORAL DISTRICTS. Zebari said that Kurdish leadership favors a single national electoral district because Iraq is still in a state of transition. However, he admitted that he has not spoken to his leadership concerning electoral issue since his return to Baghdad. Charge suggested that Sistani's preference for electoral districts by provinces had merit. If consensus on the number of seats for each province is reached, Charge explained that proportional representation with provincial districts would encourage Sunnis, promote local representation, and appeal to confessional groups. Zebari opined that the electoral district issue is not an "ideological problem" and would not lead to a "veto" from his leadership.

- RESOURCE SHARING. Charge emphasized that the USG favors an outcome in which natural resources belong to the national government, as the TAL stipulates. If natural resources are split among regions, Charge warned, it would be difficult for Iraq to conclude economic treaties, and existing IMF agreements would be invalidated. Zebari replied that there are many modalities to resource sharing, but the key issue is management. Charge asserted that the key issue for the USG is ownership -- ownership of resources by all of one country. As an example, Charge said that making clear Kirkuk oil belongs to the nation would help solve the Kirkuk issue.

- KIRKUK. Zebari said that both KDP and PUK will not allow a further postponement to the resolution of this issue. Charge inquired as to the accuracy of reports that the Government has allocated USD 55 million to Kirkuk. Zebari was uncertain, but opined that the perception that the Government is moving on this issue is important. Charge told Zebari that he would travel to Kirkuk and Sulaymania to meet with Barzani to promote the need to work on a process to address the Kirkuk issue. We have the money to spend on Kirkuk, Charge explained, but the Provincial Council must be seated first. Coupled with Article 58 discussion within the

constitutional debate, Charge stressed that three steps are required to move things forward: seats for Arabs chosen by Arabs - similar to the Turkmen arrangement - and progress on both the Iraq Property Claims Commission and the Kirkuk Foundation. On the Kirkuk issue, Zebari advised Charge to meet with Barzani and Talabani together, offering to arrange such a meeting.

Yes To Sunni Engagement

14. (C) Zebari voiced concern that an all-out outreach to Sunnis could come at the cost of existing alliances. Charge assured that this is not the case, but stressed that we want the insurgency to end. He said that the USG will continue to work with the Sunnis on constructive engagement. If the insurgency wants to talk to Iraq and the Coalition about laying down its arms, Charge said, we will encourage it "with you at the table."

Securing Foreign Missions

15. (C) Zebari informed Charge that he and Interior Minister Jabr had met July 11 with chiefs of foreign missions in Iraq and assured them that the Iraqi Government wants to offer security assistance and asked for their cooperation. He said the meeting was well received. Unfortunately, Zebari said that the recent killing of the Egyptian Charge and kidnapping attempts on the Bahraini and Pakistani envoys hurt the positive momentum gained during the recent Arab League gathering in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen committed to sending Ambassadors to Iraq. Zebari agreed with Charge that encouraging missions, especially from Arab countries, to publicly affirm their commitment to Iraq despite recent attacks, would be useful in countering the insurgency.

16. (U) REO HILLAH, REO BASRAH, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.
Satterfield